

From: [Message from the Administrator](#)
To: [Message from the Administrator](#)
Subject: EPA's response to Harvey
Date: Monday, August 28, 2017 2:47:55 PM



As you know, Harvey continues to devastate the state of Texas. The storm is still very dangerous, and the people in affected areas are experiencing tornados and catastrophic flooding. Effects will continue for the foreseeable future.

It is a top priority of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and our federal partners to work together to support authorities in the state of Texas and to protect the life and safety of those in impacted areas.

As many of you know, EPA has an organized emergency response program for responding to man-made and natural disasters and is positioned to support FEMA, state, local, and tribal partners. Headquarters' Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been activated, and we are already deploying assets to support emergency response and aftermath flooding. The National Incident Management Assistance Team, consisting of highly skilled response personnel from across the Agency, has been activated and will arrive in Dallas by tomorrow.

I have been in regular contact with Region 6 and want to commend the staff there, along with the many others across the Agency, who are part of this hurricane response effort for their leadership and preparation. As of now, we have several EPA employees who have been evacuated from their homes, some with water damage to their homes and vehicles. As you can imagine, this is very hard on our community, and I continue to keep those affected by the storm in my thoughts and prayers.

The Agency is supporting the response effort in several ways:

- We're developing surface water sampling plans to address public health concerns regarding possible contaminants found in storm water. We will begin field sampling of flood waters as soon as conditions allow.
- Our drinking water and waste water staff are ready to deploy to offer technical assistance necessary to restore services as quickly as possible. These teams will visit drinking water and waste water facilities to determine functionality and provide technical assistance as needed. At the request of the State of Texas, EPA is deploying personnel to assist the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) Drinking Water and Waste Water Phone Bank located in Austin, Texas.
- Our Superfund Remedial Project Managers worked with site operators to secure the sites last week ahead of the storm. This week we will continue to work with site operators to get status updates, conduct rapid damage assessments, and determine if additional emergency cleanup activities are necessary.
- We will be working with TCEQ to determine where the Agency can best assist the state in contacting industrial sources along the Texas coast, most of which underwent organized shutdown of their operations in advance of the storm. We will initiate contact with sources located within the storm area to determine status and plans to resume operations, and we will closely monitor startup activities.
- We're also working with the states to provide fuel and refinery waivers to address any fuel supply issues.

Helping Region 6 to manage response efforts and focusing on the safety of those affected are our highest priorities. As rainfall continues, EPA is working with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) to forecast any needs the state may have as a result of heavy rains and possible flooding.

This is one of those times when we must all be forward leaning. EPA has and will continue to work with our state partners to take care of people and continue to show our leadership to protect human health and the environment.

The response to the impacts of the storm will require a sustained and focused effort on the Agency's part. As we continue to integrate activities with the states and other federal response agencies, I want to thank all of you who are and will continue to monitor and respond to this emergency.